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ABSTRACT

This monograph explores the notion of viewing leadership as a single, interconnecting system at work in the internal and external school environment, rather than as a collection of individual roles. The document explores what the new leadership paradigm--a decentralized, collaborative model--means to schools. Leadership is viewed as an interrelated system joined at all levels, with common purpose and exercised according to organizational and community culture. Section 1 considers the idea that, if educators had understood that the restructuring movement were a democratic experiment, the results might have been far different. The section weighs the value of continuing the restructuring experiment and recommends a new role for school leaders to understand their role to help the experiment succeed. Section 2 explores the school leader's role in striking several balances central to a democracy, and section 3 offers some practical suggestions for exercising democratic leadership at the classroom, school, and community levels. Systemic leadership assumes that this conflict can be resolved through proactive interventions that have the following goals: to articulate school purpose; to strike balances between forces inherent in democratic schools; and to socialize students and adults for democracy. A conclusion is that when leadership becomes systemic, it will fulfill its role of helping people to grow individually and collectively. It will be educating democracy. (Contains 12 references.) (LMI)

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EDUCATING DEMOCRACY: THE ROLE OF SYSTEMIC LEADERSHIP

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Gary M. Crow
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National Policy Board for Educational Administration

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Contents

Preface 1

Section I. Introduction 3

1. Educating Democracy 3

Section II. Pitfalls of Democracy 7

2. Democracy, Conflict, and Chaos 7

3. Democracy and Uniformity 8

4. Democracy and Time 10

5. Democracy and Individualism 12

6. Democracy and Trust 14

7. Democracy and Power 15

8. Democracy and Followership 16

Section III. Systemic or Democratic Leadership . . . 19

9. Articulating Purpose 19

10. Striking Balances 25

11. Educating (Socializing) for Democracy 28

12. Summary and Conclusion 32

References 35

PREFACE

Rather than viewing leadership in educational organizations as a collection of individual roles, why not view leadership as a single, interconnecting system at work in the internal and external school environment? We asked Robert O. Slater, of Texas A & M University, and Gary M. Crow, of the University of Utah, to explore this notion, which they have accomplished with insight in this monograph.

This monograph begins with the assumption that readers are familiar with the shift that is occurring in the school leadership paradigm, from an authoritative, hierarchical model to a decentralized, collaborative model. This shift has evolved as research on effective organizations has mounted, suggesting that leadership of a special sort is required to manage fundamental change in organizations. This type of leadership, which draws heavily on modern social psychology, recognizes that organizations do not change unless the individuals who comprise them change first. If fundamental change thus begins with individuals, the question for leadership is how to teach individuals the value of making changes that affect themselves and their organizations, or, in other words, the value of being empowered to work collaboratively to transform organizations so that the organizations have more meaning for the individuals who comprise them.

What does this new leadership paradigm mean for schools? In many instances, administrators have found that it discredits their old roles without clearly defining new ones. They are still searching for appropriate practices—within their immediate group and with other leaders, vertically up and down the system and laterally in the broader community. Does the new paradigm mean a shift in who initiates actions, who is accountable for outcomes, or who is responsible for tending the channels of communication? Does it change the responsibilities that various leaders in the organization have to one another?

Clear answers to these questions, the authors suggest, can be found by viewing leadership from a systems perspective, rather than as a segmented function that resides in isolated positions or in particular units in a school system. Because leadership is not segmented, it stands to reason that clarifying the uncertain expectations for various school leadership roles is a task that cannot be tackled piecemeal. Better leadership by teachers requires better leadership by principals, whose leadership is inextricably tied to the leadership exercised by the superintendent and by leaders in parallel "outside" agencies. From a systems perspective, all strands of leadership are interconnected to gain maximum benefit for the total leadership function.

As the authors explain it, leadership thus is an interrelated system joined at all levels, with common purpose and exercised according to organizational and community culture. At any level, any individual can exercise effective leadership by taking actions that move individuals throughout the system toward common objectives. Likewise, any individual can practice ineffective leadership by failing to understand goals, impeding progress toward goals, or generally adopting behaviors that bring conflict rather than coherence to the organization.

By clarifying expectations, functions, and key behaviors for school leaders in the new work environment, where the leadership function is broadly systemic and interactive rather than a vertical stack of separate jobs, we believe that the authors make a major contribution to preparation programs for improving operational effectiveness. We thank them for this productive analysis of leadership, as we do Peter Wilson of the Danforth Foundation, whose support made publication of this monograph possible.

Scott D. Thomson
Executive Secretary, NPBEA
January 1996

Section I. Introduction

I. Educating Democracy

"The first duty imposed on those who now direct society is to educate democracy ... ."

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835

More than 160 years ago, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that democracy, for all of its virtues, also has a number of vices. It tends to go to extremes. When it does, it produces destructive imbalances in the lives of both individuals and groups. If democracy is to fulfill its promise, therefore, it has to be educated. Tocqueville believed that "educating democracy," making citizens aware of democracy's imbalances and of how to correct them, was the first task of leadership.

Promoting and sustaining democracy in America has always been acknowledged as one of the most important goals of public schooling, but the rhetoric has not always lived up to the reality. Witness the recent school reform movement. Democracy was not the major question in *A Nation at Risk* (1983). Economic competitiveness was. And while democracy has been a theme in school restructuring, it has by no means been the dominant one.

Nonetheless, for all of its variety, and whether or not we wish to admit it, the school restructuring movement has been mainly an experiment in democracy. Educators talked about it in different ways—devolution of authority, decentralization, site-based management, and school-based management, among other terms. Yet, these and other descriptors of the movement are only different ways of talking about the same thing: the process of making schools more democratic.

Now, one decade into our democratic experiment in American education, what have we learned?

In Section I of this monograph, we consider the idea that, if educators had understood that the restructuring movement were a democratic experiment, the results might have been far different. We also weigh the value of continuing the experiment and recommend a new role for school leaders to understand their role to help the experiment succeed. In Section II, we explore the school leader's role in striking seven balances central to a democracy; and in Section III, we offer some practical suggestions for exercising democratic leadership at the classroom, school, and community levels.

Learnings from the Restructuring Movement

If the school restructuring movement has taught us anything, it is that democratic systems are inherently unstable.

From South Carolina to Texas and California, in Chicago and Baltimore and elsewhere around the country, the school restructuring movement has generated not only instability and conflict, but even chaos. This is not to say that no progress has been made. Many reports indicate slow but steady gains in greater participation and community cohesion, and one hopes that these will eventually translate into greater student motivation and learning. But even in the most optimistic cases, conflict and instability are not uncommon.

If we had understood that restructuring schools was a democratic experiment, we would not have been surprised that the movement introduced instability, for Tocqueville described instability as one of democracy's greatest "natural defects." Observing democracy as an outsider perhaps gave Tocqueville clearer vision than we, living inside the system, might be expected to have. From inside, it is easy to play up the strengths of our society and downplay its weaknesses. We forget the first lesson of democracy that Tocqueville taught us: It has a tendency to go to extremes and to become imbalanced.

The second lesson of school restructuring is that democratization poses one of the most formidable challenges ever to confront organizational life and leadership. When leaders broaden participation in decision making, they inevitably invite instability into their organizations. If they do so without first educating people to tolerate conflict and to understand the imbalances of this type of governance, they permit democracy to slide into chaos and self-destruction. Organizational leaders who do not understand that conflict is intrinsic to democratic systems are likely to be overwhelmed by it. Indeed, some of the failures of restructuring might not have occurred if school leaders had had a better understanding of democratic systems. Many restructuring efforts were naive, led by people who were unsophisticated about democratic systems. If these leaders were aware of the positive aspects of democratic life, they were unaware of its inherent, negative extremes.

The need to increase awareness of democracy's negative tendencies is the third lesson of the restructuring movement. Democratic systems tend to become imbalanced in particular ways. They tend, for example, to strike the balance between chaos and order too far in the direction of chaos. They are inclined to emphasize the general over the particular. They favor change over tradition. They are prone to cultivate individualism at the expense of community. They tend to encourage skepticism and undermine trust. They promote decentralization while they centralize. Finally, they tend to make leadership seem more important than followership. If the democratic experiment is to succeed, educators and noneducators alike need to recognize these tendencies and work to balance them.

The Value of Continuing the Experiment

Educating democracy, of course, presumes that this form of government ought to be preserved. But why is democracy worth preserving? Why democracy?

We do not want democracy for its own sake but only for the sake of what we hope to achieve by being democratic (Dahl, 1989). That we human beings can choose how to govern ourselves is evidence of our humanity, and some of us choose democracy because we believe that, of all the alternative ways of governing, it stands the best chance of enabling us to realize our humanity. More than any other kind of political-social arrangement that we know of, democracy holds the most promise for our being able to achieve individual and collective well-being; individual growth in and through community life is both democracy's promise and its justification. Before democracy can fulfill its promise and justify itself, however, it must be educated; uneducated democracy tends to destroy itself (Revel, 1993).

A Role for School Leaders

Needless to say, we believe that leadership plays a crucial role in the education of democracy. But leadership in and for democracy is not a traditional, top-down leadership. The recognition of democracy's inherent defects, the mobilization of the collective ideals and will needed to correct these defects, especially the imbalances they create—all this requires systemwide and system-pervasive leadership; in short, systemic leadership.

Systemic leadership is also democratic leadership. For leadership to be systemic, everyone in the system must be exercising it: students, teachers, administrators, parents, and

community members. Systemic leadership is not confined to a particular sector of the organization or community or to an elite few. It is diffused throughout the whole.

It is also the case that for systemic leadership to exist, everyone in the system must be exercising followership, for without followership there can be no leadership. Systemic leadership requires that everyone practice both followership and leadership.

Democratic leadership, or systemic leadership, is one case in which top-down leadership is not necessarily bad. Leadership can be made democratic much more easily and quickly if democracy begins at the top. When the school board and superintendent both preach and practice democratic and open leadership, thereby making it legitimate, it is much easier for everyone else to practice it.

In a democracy and democratic organizations, leadership is, ultimately, everyone's business and everyone has a moral obligation to exercise it. In the school district's outermost periphery as well as in its central office, from the kindergarten classroom to the boardroom, from the superintendent to the students, leadership must be exercised if democracy is to be educated and preserved.

Democratic school reform in the United States is a small but important test of democracy. Democracy is an ideal to which we aspire, and every time we succeed, however modestly, in fulfilling our democratic aspiration, we strengthen that idea, and every time we fail, we weaken it. Democratic school reform in the United States, therefore, has something to contribute to democracy's prospects. And, as educators in a democracy, we are obligated to do what we can to make democracy work. One important thing we can do is to help educate democracy in America, and, being educators, we realize that we can do this job better if we understand our "student's" individual needs and dispositions. The purpose of this monograph is to contribute in a modest way to this understanding.

The Meaning of Democracy and Democratic Organization

When it comes to governing themselves and organizing their collective affairs, human beings have essentially three choices. They can choose rule by the one, by the few, or by the many. Democracy is rule by the many.

Democratic organization means, at minimum then, that decision making is not confined to one or to a few people but becomes the work of many. In organizations, this work essentially comes down to the work of defining problems, setting goals for solving the problems, identifying alternative strategies for achieving the goals that have been set, choosing from among these alternatives definite courses of action to be pursued, and then evaluating the results.

The more that an organization's members and stakeholders have a say in every phase of this problem-finding-decision-making process, whether that say be direct or indirect, the more democratic the organization is. The fewer the members that are involved, directly or indirectly, in this process, the less democratic the organization is.

Democracy is rule by the many. But when many are involved in decision making, the diversity of opinions and points of view increases. The potential for miscommunication, disagreement, conflict, and confusion grows. Thus, democracy in and of itself is no guarantee that group life will be well ordered, that individuals will grow in and through their common (community) effort, or that the things most worth doing will be the things that actually get done.

For all of this to happen, democracy depends on leadership, especially systemic leadership—systemwide and system-pervasive leadership.

Section II. Pitfalls of Democracy

2. Democracy, Conflict, and Chaos

"Agitation and instability are natural elements in democratic republics."

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835

All organizations must strike a balance between chaos and order. Order and ordered life are essential characteristics of all social organizations, whether they are as large as nation-states or as small as schools. Without any order, an organization ceases to be an organization. At the same time, however, an organization can be too orderly. Organizations, just as individuals, must be able to adapt to an ever-changing environment; too much order undermines the capacity to innovate. So, a social organization destroys itself if it fails to strike a balance between too much and too little order.

Not all organizations strike the same balance, however. Some are more orderly than others, and from the earliest beginnings of social thought, it has always been understood that of the three major forms of government—rule by the one, by the few, and by the many—democracy is the most disorderly.

Democratic organizations tend to be disorderly because they leave the solution of the problem of social order largely up to individual choice and will, while their authoritarian counterparts solve the problem by imposing the will of the group, i.e., by relying more on external force and control. One kind of society achieves its order from the inside out, as it were, while the other does so from the outside in.

Because democracies depend on individuals to order themselves, they must rely more on education than other kinds of regimes. People are probably not born with a natural disposition to curb and restrain their individual wills, and they especially tend not to do so if their culture wants them to be individuals and encourages self-expression. In such a culture, they must learn self-control and self-restraint. And since education, in the short run at least, is always more difficult than coercion, and since no education is perfectly efficient, a democratic society always tends to be more chaotic than its authoritarian opposite.

This is evident in the empirical data. When we compared forty or so of the world's largest nations, for example, we found that the more democratic a nation is, the more political and social instability it suffers. In fact, using common measures of democracy and stability (Estes, 1984), we found that democracies are about 40 percent more likely to have demonstrations, strikes, riots, armed attacks, domestic violence, etc., than nondemocratic countries. Democracies tend to be more disorderly than nondemocracies.

The recent experience with school restructuring gives educators every reason to believe, and little cause to doubt, that what holds true empirically for large social organizations such as nation-states, also holds true for small ones such as schools and school systems.

Thus, the conflict and instability that educators have experienced in the school restructuring movement are perhaps, and in part, a function of democracy itself.

3. Democracy and Uniformity

"... the democratic citizen sees nothing but people more or less like himself around him, and so he cannot think about one branch of mankind without widening his view until it includes the whole. ... Hence, it becomes an ardent and often blind passion of the human spirit to discover common rules for everything, to include a great number of objects under the same formula, and to explain a group of facts by one sole cause."

"...every central government worships uniformity; uniformity saves it the trouble of inquiring into infinite details, which would be necessary if the rules were made to suit men instead of subjecting all men indiscriminately to the same rule."

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835

Democracy makes us inclined to generalize. And this inclination, in turn, causes us administratively to assume that all schools have the same problems and, therefore, should be subject to the same solutions or policies, even though everyone knows that no two schools are exactly alike, that they have different problems, and that any rule made to be applied across the board is bound to be, in most cases at least, somewhat inappropriate and in not a few cases completely so.

In nondemocracies, the differences between people in class, status, and power are not only marked but institutionalized, and the widespread recognition and acceptance of differences produces social policies that not only acknowledge but seek to preserve these differences. People are presumed to be unequal and different, and they are treated as such.

In democracies, by contrast, people are presumed to be equal, to be without difference, at least in so far as politics is concerned. But democracy's desire to eliminate discrimination in politics is itself indiscriminate, and what was initially intended to apply only to politics becomes, over time, applied to everything. This is because democracy comes down less to the pursuit of equality and more to the relentless effort to seek out and eradicate all inequalities. And since any inequality is, at bottom, based on our perception of some kind of difference between things and people and our willingness to rank them on the basis of these differences, democracy assails our awareness of difference, teaches us to ignore dissimilarities, and produces in us, thereby, an inclination to generalize.

There is, as everyone knows, an ongoing debate in education over whether qualitative research methods are to be preferred to quantitative methods. Much of this argument hinges on whether one believes, as Tocqueville puts it, that "there are no beings exactly alike in nature, no identical facts, no laws, which can be applied indiscriminately in the same way to several objects at once" (Tocqueville, 1835:437). Qualitative researchers subscribe to the view that there are no such beings, while quantitative types think there are. Their difference comes down to an argument over difference, with the quantitative types reflecting the democratic disposition to ignore differences and to generalize.

We generalize mainly because we have to. Otherwise, we could not deal with complexity of things and would be always "lost in a wilderness of detail and not be able to see anything at all" (Tocqueville, 1835:437). Nonetheless, generalization has its drawbacks, as ignoring the details means

losing information that might prove useful in later decision making.

Democratic administrations are attracted to generalization and the promulgation of blanket policies, partly because it seems more efficient do so and partly because to do otherwise is to give differential treatment, which, in a culture of equality, is always to invite political controversy. Blanket policy-making seems both easier and politically prudent.

But schools would probably be better served by differentiated policy-making, policies that are tailored to meet the specific problems and needs of particular schools. The most recent attempt to solve this dilemma has been site-based management, which amounts to a movement away from central policy-making in general.

5. Democracy and Time

"Not only are [the inhabitants of democracies] by nature lacking in any taste for public business, but they also lack the time for it."

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835

Democratization takes time. Ralph Tyler used to say that any substantive change in schools took at least five to seven years. Case studies of the democratization process suggest that this estimate is not at all exaggerated.

Democratization takes time because it almost always requires some adjustment in the way organizational life is structured, particularly how communication is structured. Democratic organization seeks to maximize communication within groups and between groups. It takes time to break down old barriers to communication and to engage in the new and more intense communication patterns that replace them.

The transition from a nondemocratic organization, for example, usually involves many more formal meetings than in the past. It also involves more stock-taking and new programs. People who have been confined to and/or focused on a limited set of tasks or responsibilities suddenly find themselves having to pay more attention to what others are doing. They end up usually having to try new ways of doing things. All of this takes time.

Democratization takes time, but in democracies, time is always particularly scarce. Time is scarce in a democracy, first, because people are always busy looking for ways to better themselves and their current situations. Progress, improvement, and change are core democratic values, and these things tend to keep people preoccupied and give them little time for anything but the tasks at hand, which always seem to be enmeshed in a sense of urgency. Democratic life, as Tocqueville described it, tends to be "practical, complicated, agitated, and active," and this makes time scarce.

The Tradition-change Balance

Democracy not only takes time, but it also affects people's sense of time, especially our appreciation of the past. All social organizations, large or small, have histories and traditions, however short and meager they may be. But organizations and institutions vary in the degree to which they are aware of their past and how much they use their awareness of their traditions to shape and form group life in the present.

One of democracy's dispositions is that, more than any other type of society, it looks to the future and toward change and away from tradition and the past. Tradition in a democracy is seen more as a burden than a guide. The past is not to be remembered but to be escaped and forgotten. Remember, many of the first settlers of the world's democracies were banished from the Old World and went to the new precisely because they wished to escape their past and sought a clean slate. Such a people looked to the future and for change. For them, the new, progress, was the test of everything good.

There is probably no better recent evidence for this point than the success of Ken Burns' historical documentaries on the Civil War and baseball in America. When people in a democracy are finally reminded of their history in a manner that appeals to their modern sensibilities, they suddenly realize how hungry they are for their past and what it can do for them, especially what it can do for restoring meaning to the present.

To say, however, that democracies have a tendency to ignore their past and traditions is not to say that all of their institutions do so. If this were the case, democracies would

forsake all of their past and values and plunge themselves into chaos. Some of a democracy's institutions, notably its schools, act to check or brake the disposition for change. In democratic societies, schools function as a mechanism for governing change, dampening the taste for it without extinguishing it altogether. In such a society, schools are fundamentally conservative.

Schools and schooling tend to be conservative in a democracy because almost everything else leans toward the opposite extreme. Schools in democratic societies are among the relatively few conservative points in a sea of change, and this makes them especially resistant to their own reform. In traditional societies, schools function mainly as agents of social change, but in democratic cultures, they have a different role thrust upon them. They are made the keepers of tradition, and they work to counterbalance the democratic disposition for change.

This is partly why it is so hard to change school structure in a democracy. Every school strikes the tradition-change balance differently. Depending upon the backgrounds of their students, their staff, and their leadership, some are more oriented toward change than others. But schools, when compared to other institutions in democratic societies, tend to strike the balance more on the side of tradition.

Those who wish to exercise leadership for school reform, therefore, must first find out where their particular school lies on the tradition-change continuum; they also must bear in mind that, in a democracy, they work within an enterprise that is fundamentally conservative.

5. Democracy and Individualism

"Individualism is a calm and considered feeling which disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of his fellows and withdraw into the circle of family and friends; with this little society formed to his taste, he gladly leaves the greater society to look after itself."

"One must admit that equality, while it brings great benefits to mankind, opens the door ... to very dangerous instincts. It tends to isolate men from each other so that each thinks only of himself."

"The despot will lightly forgive his subjects for not loving him, provided they do not love one another. ... He calls those who try to unite their efforts to create a general prosperity 'turbulent and restless spirits,' and twisting the natural meaning of words, he calls those 'good citizens' who care for none but themselves."

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* 1835

Democracy and Autonomy

We have said that democracy takes time because it requires new ways of communicating. But it also takes time because it requires changes in the way people think and feel about things. People have to be ready for democracy, ready not only in the sense that they want it, but also in the sense that they know how to cope with it and the extraordinary demands it inevitably makes on them. Again, of the three major forms of government, democratic organization is by far the most demanding.

Democracy is so demanding in large part because it requires that people have the willingness and the ability to organize and order themselves as opposed to being organized and ordered by others. Order in a democracy must come from the inside out rather than from the outside in. The more a democracy has to rely on external authority for social order and control, the less, by definition, it is a democracy. Democratic organization needs and wants people who are self-controlled or self-governed. It needs, in short, people who are autonomous.

Autonomy and Authority

Autonomy and being autonomous has much to do with how individuals respond to and deal with authority, and since the group is the source of all authority, autonomy has much to do with how individuals relate to their groups.

We only have authority to the degree that the group of which we are a part allows us to have it. Authority is conferred upon individuals by their groups. We have authority only if others believe that we have it, only if they give it to us. When they stop believing in us, we are like the emperor who has no clothes. All authority, therefore, comes from the group.

Authority, especially traditional authority, affects the way people think and especially the way they feel. Who has not at one time or another experienced the impact of authority? Out of either fear or admiration, and probably a combination of both, most of us at some point in our lives have felt somehow constrained—tongue-tied, we like to say—in the presence of some authority, whether it was a boss, a parent, or a well-known personality.

Individuals who have learned to be autonomous have in part learned how to control the effects that authority has on

their thoughts and, especially, their emotions. When in the presence of authority, they have learned how to strike in themselves a particular balance between reason and emotion, a cognitive-emotional balance that enables them to challenge authority while at the same time appreciate it. This is the cognitive-emotional response to authority that is both required of, and defines, the democratic personality.

Autonomy and the Group

The paradox of autonomy is that individuals can achieve it only by participating in group life. The belief that we can become individuals by separating ourselves from groups, by standing apart from them, on our own two feet, as it were, is an illusion, and a dangerous illusion at that. It is a false sense of individuality, which John Dewey (1917) went so far as to call a form of insanity. We can only achieve true individuality, autonomy, in and through participation in group life.

A pitfall of democracy is that it tends to cultivate a false sense of individuality and egoistic individualism whereby people come to believe that they can achieve autonomy by cutting themselves off from others and focusing mainly on their own private affairs. This egoistic individualism, needless to say, is highly destructive to democracy.

6. Democracy and Trust

"Democratic institutions awaken and flatter the passion for equality without ever being able to satisfy it entirely. ... [People] are excited by the chance and irritated by the uncertainty of success; the excitement is followed by weariness and then by bitterness."

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835

Every culture must strike a balance between skepticism and trust, and democratic cultures tend to strike this balance more on the side of skepticism. One danger is that they tend to take skepticism to an extreme.

Democracies encourage skepticism because they put so much emphasis on reason and the use of reason; democracies are the regimes of reason, or science, which is one of the highest forms of reason. Democracy was born of Enlightenment politics first felt in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. This was a time when reason replaced faith as the main guide in deciding who got power, how power could and could not be used, and when it was to be given up. Reason was used to question traditional authority, which is most effective and efficient when it is not questioned.

But in regimes of reason, reason is not satisfied to question authority; it questions everything. And the more it questions, the more it wants to question. Over time, everything comes to be doubted, and the skepticism that was originally brought to bear only on religion and matters of faith eventually pervades the culture and is applied indiscriminately. Thus, democracies tend toward a stage in which reason itself becomes unreasonable. The rational pursuit of equality ends up producing ever greater inequality.

One result of this process is that more and more people come to have less and less confidence in one another and in their key institutions. They stop trusting, and as trust levels fall, people turn inward, becoming increasingly self-absorbed and self-oriented, and they begin to behave in ways that give others even less reason to trust them.

The United States may well be heading in this direction, according to *The General Social Surveys* of the National Opinion Research Center. These data show that trust levels have dropped in recent years. Between 1984 and 1994, for example, the number of people eighteen years old and over who felt that "most people can be trusted" fell from 47 to 34 percent.

Although it is difficult to gauge precisely how low levels of trust affect schools, it seems clear that lack of respect for authority undermines the entire structure of public education. Indeed, lack of respect for authority, coupled with lack of self-discipline, has often topped the Gallup poll on public education as a critical problem facing U.S. teachers. Likewise, relations between teachers and administrators have turned adversarial in many school systems, as each group fails to respect the other.

If these signs of skepticism are evidence of reason taken to extremes, there is a solution. The solution is not to abandon reason but to educate it (Siegel, 1988). For leaders interested in more democratic schools, the challenge is to strike a healthy balance between reasoned skepticism and trust.

7. Democracy and Power

"... fear of disorder and love of well-being unconsciously lead democracies to increase the functions of the central government, the only power which they think strong, intelligent, and stable enough to protect them from anarchy."

"The chief and, in a sense, the only condition necessary in order to succeed in centralizing the supreme power in a democratic society is to love equality or to make believe that you do so."

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835

Democracies have a regressive tendency: power tends to reconcentrate in them. Democracy, by definition, involves the devolution of power, meaning that power is decentered and deconcentrated; decision making done by only a relatively few people is given over to relatively many. But power does not give up its prerogatives easily, and there is always a tendency in a democracy for power to reconstitute and reconcentrate itself. And even if it does not do so in its original place and form, it often does so in different places and forms.

Case studies of school restructuring in Chicago, for example, have shown that when power devolved from the central office to the school, local community groups took control, putting in their own people, who, if anything, were more controlling and authoritarian than the central office. Power had only reconcentrated in a different place.

Early on in the school restructuring movement, schools found themselves with site-based management committees, which supposedly had authority to make decisions previously made by the central office. But in many instances, this new decision-making power ran up against various state mandates and rules, which effectively negated, or at least radically constrained, any decision made by the new committees. This is an example of power reconstituted in a different form.

Why do democracies have this regressive tendency to recentralize? It is, in part, Tocqueville argues, a function of the general lifestyle that democracy creates, a way of living that is, in his words, "practical, complicated, agitated, and active."

People in a democracy are always striving to succeed, to get ahead, to distinguish and differentiate themselves from others. To do this, they must focus most of their attention, most of the time, on themselves and their own practical affairs. They have neither the time nor the taste for public business. It is always an effort for such people "to tear themselves away from their private lives and pay attention to those of the community; the natural inclination is to let the only visible and permanent representative of collective interest, that is to say, the state, look after them" (Tocqueville, 1835:671).

Put in more familiar terms, democratic organization tends to complicate organizational life. Decision making, once confined to a few people, becomes the prerogative of many. It makes for more deliberation, more meetings, new programs, and the like—all of which must be squeezed into the same eight-hour day already filled with activity. Pressed for time, focused on keeping their own classrooms in order, teachers are naturally inclined to let someone else do the decision making. Principals, accustomed to doing so, willingly accommodate. Restructuring becomes little more than an exercise on paper.

5. Democracy and Followership

"When conditions are almost equal, one man is not easily to be persuaded by another. When all men see each other at close quarters, have learned the same things, and led the same life, there is no natural inclination for them to accept one of their number as a guide and follow him ... ."

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* 1835

Another pitfall of democracy is that it tends to overemphasize the role of leadership and underemphasize the role of followership. As a result, over time, people become increasingly reluctant to follow, and democracy's leadership finds it increasingly difficult to lead.

When we think of leadership, we tend naturally to think of individual leaders and what they do and what they say. But leadership requires followership; without followers, there can be no leaders. So leadership is not really something that single individuals engage in or exercise but is rather something that emerges out of the interaction between people. It is really a misnomer to speak of the "role of leadership" because leadership is always only one-half of a two-part role, the other part being the role of followership.

Disraeli once remarked, "I am their leader, therefore I must follow them," indicating that he, too, recognized this two-sidedness of leadership. And many successful school principals have been heard to remark that their leadership was as much a matter of their following others as it was leading them.

Leadership, then, is a matter of striking a balance between leading and following, sometime exercising one and sometimes the other, often blending the two.

This point can be put in slightly different and more practical terms by saying that leadership is always a matter of balancing the need to coordinate with the necessity of cooperation, for what may appear from the point of view of leadership as a problem of coordination is from the perspective of the followership always a question of cooperation.

Just as leadership is an art, so is followership. But the art of followership in our culture has been much neglected. In no small part, this is because there is little honor attached to it, and this, again, is one of the weaknesses of democracy.

It is not possible in the short space of this monograph to address in any satisfactory way the question of why, in a democracy, the thought of being a follower, as opposed to being a leader, is not popular. But we believe it has in large part to do with democracy's marked tendency to emphasize the importance of individuality and being an individual.

For present purposes, it is simply sufficient to note that however crucial it may be to the effective exercise of leadership, learning to be a follower is not an honorable pursuit in our democratic culture. Accordingly, followership and following have been given much less attention than leadership, even though one is not possible without the other, and all effective leaders must have managed somehow to teach themselves about followership and are probably expert followers themselves.

Followership

Followership is proactive

Followership is often wrongly supposed to be passive in nature. It is sometimes even presumed to involve a sheeplike response to leadership. But this is a mistaken notion of followership. Just as good leaders are proactive so also are good followers.

The idea that followership is passive has its source in the mistaken notion that leadership automatically accompanies positions of leadership, the notion that the organization's hierarchy determines who can exercise leadership and who

cannot. From this point of view, supervisors are automatically presumed to be leaders and subordinates are looked upon as followers. But just because someone holds a supervisory position does not mean that he or she can lead anymore than that anyone who occupies a subordinate position means he or she will automatically follow. Organizational position does not guarantee either leadership or followership. Good followership is just as pro]active as good leadership.

Followership as a decision to cooperate

Proactive followership begins with a decision to cooperate. The decision to cooperate, to expend one's efforts in concert with others to accomplish some purpose deemed by most, if not all, to be worthy of accomplishment—this decision itself implies further decision-making and problem-solving activity.

GOODWILL—Effective cooperation requires, in the first place, a modicum of goodwill, which is itself a kind of decision. Having and showing goodwill toward others is itself part rational decision making and part emotion. Having and showing goodwill is something we deliberatively and rationally choose to do or not to do. It is a state of mind or attitude in which we decide to regard others in terms of their strengths rather than their weaknesses.

Goodwill, however, also involves feelings of sympathy outward others. These feelings motivate further decisions about what we must do to act in concert to achieve our common purpose. Acting in concert often requires us to make compromises, which would be unnecessary were we to act alone. Cooperation requires us to do things in ways that would not be our way were we not to take others into consideration. It requires a decision on our part to be supportive of others and to agree, preferably in a cheerful manner, to modify our behavior in light of their interests as well as our own. This is goodwill. It is a balance between being totally self-interested an directed and totally other-directed.

MUTUAL ADJUSTMENT—Goodwill necessarily means mutual adjustment. When people crossing a street avoid colliding with one another, they are engaging in mutual adjustment. Each sees the other and tries to adjust his or her speed and direction so as not to collide. This is mutual adjustment.

Mutual adjustment requires looking out for others. Mutual adjustment and goodwill require looking out for others in the fullest sense of the phrase, and implies caring.

CARING—In addition to goodwill and mutual adjustment, caring is a third ingredient of followership. Mutual adjustment with goodwill means caring about others. In the organizational context, it means, in particular, caring about the implications of one's decisions for the work lives of others.

COMMITMENT—In the postmodern world, commitment replaces reason (science) as the primary source of meaning. Modernity—that period that stretched roughly from the late seventeenth century to the twentieth century, that period out of which we are now moving, that period in which reason (science) became the guiding value in society and the primary and most legitimate standard for conduct——is based on a commitment to reason. Everything becomes subject to reason, even commitment itself. As a result, commitment—our capacity to commit—is undermined.

For the past decade, organizational culture has become central in the discourse on leadership. Leadership is said to consist of building new organizational cultures and destroying old ones. Leaders have come to recognize that symbol and substance play an important role in organizational effectiveness.

All of this interest in organizational culture, ritual, myth, and ceremony is an offshoot and indicator of the movement from modernity to postmodernity, the movement in which we now find ourselves. The most important part of a culture is its nonrational part. Culture appeals not only and even primarily to human reason but to human emotions. At

its strongest, organizational culture—the things we take for granted about purpose and technique in our work—becomes so familiar to us that we do not even think about it, even though it has a determinate influence in our problem-finding, problem-solving, and decision-making activities. This is why different cultures find coexistence difficult and we talk about "culture wars." If they are strong cultures, each commands loyalty from the organization's membership. But since they contradict one another, the organization's members cannot adhere to both simultaneously. To do so is to generate further contradiction, irrationality, conflict, and, potentially, organizational chaos.

Commitment, particularly commitment to a common purpose, is largely a matter of organizational culture, and such commitment is a primary source of meaning. Without a commitment to purpose and goals, action is meaningless. The stronger the culture, the stronger the commitments that people can and do make to organizational goals, and the stronger their commitment to purpose and meaning the whole enterprise has.

An ingredient of good followership, commitment, particularly commitment to organizational purpose, is a source of meaning and motivation. To have goodwill, to consider the problems that others must solve in their work lives, to mutually adjust one's behavior in the interest of group unity and achievement of purpose, and to commit one's self and efforts to all of these things are all necessary conditions of effective followership.

COMMUNICATIONS—While necessary, however, these four ingredients of good followership are not sufficient. They require frequent and open communication. Without communication, good followership is impossible.

Followership requires, in the first place, frequent and open communication between the leadership and followership. Although reason is not the whole of followership, followers must always have good reason to follow. The exercise of followership is hard work, certainly as hard as the work of leadership, probably even more so. Good followership always requires that a balance be struck between respect for authority on the one hand and a disposition to challenge it on the other. Leaders who only hear "Yes" usually end up failing or at least being less effective than they could if they heard dissenting opinions. Decision making is usually better when all sides of an issue are considered. But presenting alternative positions is seldom easy work. It usually means challenging power, and to challenge power, even sympathetically, is usually to put one's formal position and authority at risk. Accordingly, because it entails a delicate balance between dissent and consent, good followership is always hard work.

Much of the work of good followership comes down to good communication, communication between followership and leadership and between and among followers themselves.

The Leadership-Followership Equation

The simple fact of the matter, increasingly reflected in the school restructuring literature, is that for democracy to work, people have to be prepared for it, and being prepared for democracy means learning both sides of the leadership equation:

Leadership=Followership

One cannot lead unless one is also able to follow, and one cannot follow unless one also can lead.

Most effective leaders at least intuitively understand the leadership equation. But in those cases where it is not recognized, the leadership-followership equation cannot be obtained, and the interaction becomes imbalanced and transforms itself into either simple coercion, deceit, self-deception, or some combination thereof.

Section III. Systemic or Democratic Leadership

9. Articulating Purpose

Democracy's extreme tendencies suggest that the people charged with educating democracy must exercise a special kind of leadership. We maintain that this kind of leadership is systemic. That is, rather than residing on the intermediate and top rungs of the organizational ladder, school leadership must pervade the school system, empowering people in each classroom, school, and community.

Although this monograph speaks to school leaders, all educational administrators who are effective in educating democracy will acknowledge the value of, and invite system-wide participation in, the leadership function. Such administrators have three major leadership responsibilities: (1) to articulate purpose, (2) to balance organizational extremes, and (3) to socialize individuals for democracy. The remainder of this monograph is devoted to discussing each of these responsibilities and offering specific suggestions to administrators who want to develop systemic leadership at the classroom, school, and community levels.

Articulation

The responsibility for articulating purpose refers not to a need for democratic administrators to speak distinctly about their school goals. Rather, it refers to a the art of forming and fitting into a systemic whole.

Articulating school purpose in a democracy necessarily begins with empowering individuals. It is a process that must gradually work outward to involve the entire school community. The role of democratic administrators is not to solve people's problems for them but to enable them to solve their own problems. As problem-solving enablers (Fullan, 1992), they need to articulate a system that empowers people to define their own school goals. In this process, the democratic administrator will be challenged by many of democracy's tendencies to go to extremes, including the lack of time and interest that individuals have for group life and their skepticism about its value to their own lives.

Administrators who succeed in articulating school purpose will do so because they have the ability to win people's interest in building something together. Further, they will have the ability to organize cooperative working relations among students, teachers, and the community so they can construct a mission for schools that integrates individual activities, ideals, and aspirations.

Constructing such a mission, just like building anything, starts with a foundation of individual pieces and builds up. How far the construction rises depends on the administrator's ability to continually refocus people's attention on purpose, for democracy constantly distracts people with urgent personal business, making it easy to defer group goals. To counteract this negative tendency, administrators must continually remind people to articulate a purpose for schools. And they must ensure that achievement of that purpose is the focus of all other school decisions, communications, and resources.

Rights and Responsibilities

Although articulating purpose thus means more than a manner of speaking, what democratic administrators say is critical. In fact, leaders' talk, particularly their political talk, can make or break their ability to lead systemically. In regard to articulating purpose, the major political issue that administrators face is how to talk about the necessary balance peo-

ple must strike between their individual right to articulate purpose for schools with their responsibility to collaboratively construct a collective purpose for the community's schools.

Talk about individual rights and responsibilities tends to take extreme forms in democracies, where rights get emphasized at the expense of responsibilities. Rather than striking a balance between rights and responsibilities, democracies tend to focus on rights. Over time, the imbalance grows, affecting the way people in a democracy talk about rights. They not only talk about rights more often, but more simplistically, ignore personal responsibility. As the rhetoric of personal liberty grows increasingly intemperate, political discourse becomes impoverished. This kind of rights talk becomes both a symptom of, and contributing factor to, disorder in the body politic and works against "the pursuit of dignified living by free women and men" (Glendon, 1991:xi).

A goal of systemic leadership is to restore balance to the rights-responsibility issue by opening the conversation about school purpose to everyone and by emphasizing the relationship between individual and systemwide concerns. Once people are engaged, it is no longer the role of an administrator at some level in the school hierarchy to remind people to balance rights with responsibilities. The balance will be inherent systemically, pervading all organizational and community levels.

Restoring the rights-responsibility balance is a difficult political issue. The democratic administrator who repeatedly attempts to counterbalance rights talk with responsibility talk may have initial difficulty attracting an audience. Talk about rights has been so "dumbed down" that it is difficult to get people to listen to talk about responsibilities. Further, the administrator who constantly emphasizes responsibilities risks sounding moralistic or just plain out of touch. Successful democratic administrators have the ability to talk about these issues in a way that appeals to modern sensibilities and, in so doing, begin constructing a system that helps everyone articulate individual and collective purposes for education.

Purpose as Growth

Any administrator who attempts to articulate purpose in a school will likely discover that people have in mind not just one purpose of schooling but many purposes, and that these various and many purposes often cannot be pursued at once without contradiction, conflict, or overtaxing scarce resources. In a democracy, is there a justification for bringing unity to this multiplicity, and, if so, how can such unity be achieved?

To deal with this problem, we must remember that we do not want democracy for its own sake but only because we believe that it, more than any other form of social organization, most enables us to achieve individual and collective well-being; though democracy does not guarantee growth, it at least makes possible individual growth within a community.

There is a tendency in democracies, as in all types of systems, to focus attention on the maintenance of the system itself. But democratic process for its own sake is misguided. Schools that seek to be democratic must aim to enable growth so that individuals can realize their potential within a community. Leaders in these schools must keep that purpose constantly before students, teachers, and the community.

To take individual growth as the main purpose of schooling in a democracy is to include the growth of all citizens of the school—students, staff, parents, and administrators. A school that seeks to focus on the growth of students while ignoring the growth of adults will accomplish neither. But individual growth is only part of the purpose. The other part is growth within a community. Growth for an individual's sake alone is not democratic, nor is it even sociologically and psychologically possible. Human beings can only grow as individuals to the degree that they become part of and attached to a community of other human beings.

So while different people may hold different purposes for schooling, in a democracy, these purposes are subordinate to growth. The task of democratic leadership is to challenge stu-

dents, teachers, and the community to articulate their particular and concrete individual purposes of schooling in such a way that they contribute to the aim of individual and community growth.

Summing up to this point, we have maintained that articulating purpose is one of three major responsibilities of systemic or democratic leadership. This includes facilitating the work of school constituents to construct a purpose for the school based on the aim of human growth in and for the community. Articulating purpose also involves maintaining this aim by keeping it constantly in focus and reinforcing it with school constituents.

Articulating Purpose at Three Levels: The Classroom, the School, and the Community

We now turn to the implications of this point for the three basic levels of schooling and school systems: the classroom, the school, and the district, or community.

Articulating purpose at the classroom level

We have suggested that one of the major pitfalls of democracy lies in the tension between liberty and responsibility. An emphasis on liberty in a democratic system runs the risk of tipping the balance into irresponsible individualism. It is at the classroom level of the school organization that this is most visible.

Both students and teachers may see instruction from only a human growth perspective. How does the curriculum and instructional program reinforce individual values and growth? But such an approach ignores the responsibility of individuals for the communities/groups within which they live, work, and study.

For teachers, this pitfall can be seen in the familiar teacher-behind-the-classroom-door syndrome. Even some of the latest movements in teacher professionalism reinforce the behind-the-closed-door approach to teaching, effectively ignoring community responsibility. No doubt some of this has been encouraged by administrators who attempt to reduce teacher autonomy and bureaucratize instruction. Nonetheless, it is a tendency that must be counterbalanced in the interest of individual growth and community.

The articulation of purpose, the first function of systemic leadership, means, in the first place, reminding people at all levels of the system that the purpose of education is growth, and that this is only possible within a community. Building such a community is a necessity of the highest order.

Reinforcing and supporting community is also part of leadership's responsibility in articulating purpose. Reminding individuals of purpose means reminding them of how their actions support or hinder community development.

We have already said that articulating purpose involves both the formulation of purpose and the reinforcement and protection of that purpose. Thus, in practice, systemic leadership means enabling school groups to articulate purposes that balance individual growth and community.

Put in more concrete terms, school administrators can articulate purpose by:

(1) **Observing teachers and holding conferences with them about instructional processes that emphasize individual achievement while also engendering of a sense of community responsibility.**

(2) **Helping teachers "reflect in action" on the instructional organization of their classrooms and working with them to identify ways in which the manner in which instruction is organized, e.g., whole group, cooperative small groups, or individualized.** This includes rethinking the kind of assignments given and student evaluation in terms of how they contribute to individual growth and community.

(3) **Emphasizing community responsibilities as well as individual achievement whenever talking with students and parents.**

(4) **Working with teacher and parent groups in developing ways to monitor, evaluate, and report student progress that emphasizes community responsibilities as well as individual achievement.**

(5) **Providing teachers with opportunities to attend conferences, visit classrooms, and discover readings that emphasize individual growth in and through community.**

Articulating purpose at the school level

When articulating purpose at the school level, democratic leadership must strike a balance between taking too much responsibility, on the one hand, and too little on the other.

One of the pitfalls of democracy, as we have said, is that it tends to regress, i.e., power tends to recentralize. This can happen if the formal leadership slips into authoritarian approaches when articulating purpose. Because they run out of time, patience, or energy, administrators may simply find themselves no longer able to tolerate the conflict and disagreement that inevitably accompanies the articulation of diverse purposes. So, they impose their own purpose and attempt to coerce others to but into it. The result is that teachers, students, and parents do not feel the school's purpose is their own, and they have no commitment to its implementation and protection.

At the other extreme, administrators may simply abdicate responsibility for articulating purpose altogether. This means letting others construct purpose with little guidance or support from the formal position of leadership. The result of such a laissez faire approach is usually chaos, for nobody steps in to mediate conflicting purposes.

The practice of democratic leadership demands that these two extremes be balanced. We suggest that school administrators can articulate and reinforce this balance at the school level by facilitating the inclusion of others in the decision-making process. The suggestions below reinforce system-infused leadership by granting a voice in decision making to school constituents. When leadership is systemic, the responsibility *and* the power are diffused. This diminishes the chaos that creates the tendency either to recentralize or to abdicate.

In concrete terms, administrators can practice systemic leadership by facilitating the diffusion of responsibility and power in the following ways:

(1) **Including representatives from all school constituencies—students, teachers, parents, and administrators—when discussing and formulating school purpose.** The cross-fertilization of ideas will create more realistic individual visions, and the group process will build commitment to the common purpose.

(2) **Giving each constituent an equal vote. Even elementary school students can contribute ideas about what they want to learn, if choices are built into the curriculum.** Witness curriculums built around particular themes or the support programs of the Henry Levin Accelerated Schools concept.

(3) **Facilitating group discussions to ensure that each member articulates his or her views on the purpose of public instruction.** Silence does not signal consent in group processes, and only by eliciting ideas from everyone will the administrator be assured that each person feels investment in, ownership of, and commitment to the purpose ultimately formulated.

(4) **Directing all discussions on purpose toward the promise of democracy to stimulate individual growth.** Encouraging all parties to state their views about what the purpose of the instructional program should be. Only by opening up this process will there be investment and ownership of the purpose and consistent protection of it after the purpose has been formulated.

(5) **Framing all discussions about the purpose of instruction in terms of individual growth in, and through, community-building.**

(6) **Listening to what others are saying regarding organizational presses and decisions. This gives clues as to where and how leadership should be exercised to keep purpose in the collective mind.**

(7) **Communicating and recommunicating the purpose of the instructional program to all groups within the school.**

(8) **Upholding the school's purpose in all future discussions of instructional factors, e.g., in faculty meetings, parent conferences, and the like.**

(9) **Using the school's purpose and the purpose of instruction as a decision-making principle in the course of performing routine tasks such as observing classrooms; talking with students, teachers and parents; and securing resources.**

(10) **Developing reward systems for both student and teachers that encourage individual growth and reinforce community responsibility.**

Three facts about these principles of practical democratic leadership should keep democracy from sliding into chaos. First, the representative nature of the group should keep inappropriate visions from being formulated, although they probably will and should be considered. Second, the explicit agreement by all parties that any purposes collectively arrived at must fit into the broader context of human growth in and through community should reduce the range of inappropriate visions for the school's instructional program. Third, and finally, chaos should be averted by the administration's commitment to this purpose and its reinforcements.

The process of reaching agreement on instructional goals and purposes in a democratic setting is itself democratic. One of the authors, for example, worked with a school district in an attempt to establish a shared decision-making process pertaining to the elementary school instructional program. There was much intense discussion about how to bring other teachers into the process of formulating some instructional goals for the district, especially whether principals should be present at grade-level meetings. After a lengthy discussion of pros and cons, the consultant checked to see if consensus had been reached. Everyone at the meeting agreed that principals should be included in these meetings. The consultant double-checked to make sure everyone agreed. Again, total consent. Immediately following adjournment of the meeting, a teacher approached the consultant and said, "I don't think the principal should be included in these meetings."

When the consultant asked why she had not brought this up during the meeting, the teacher replied that she felt it would be heard better if the consultant brought it up.

Incidents such as these illustrate the need for leaders to ensure that the process by which instructional purposes are formulated is democratic in terms of both liberty and responsibility. All individuals must have the freedom to express their views and have an equal vote. They must also, however, accept their responsibility to abide by the consensus developed in the group, i.e., they must be able to follow.

Articulating purpose at the community level

Democratic leadership at the community level means striking a balance between traditional values and change. Schools, and those who work in and around them, are both keepers of tradition and agents of social change. When things become imbalanced, one or the other of these roles is carried to an extreme. At the one extreme, education becomes mired in the past. Things become so tipped toward tradition and preserving traditional values, that people and their communities become incapable of adapting to a changing environment. Growth stops.

At the other extreme of the tradition-change balance, there is little sense of the past and respect for its values. There is only change.

People need to remember their past in order to give meaning to their present and future. Without history, without a sense of where one has been, the task of choosing among the myriad alternative courses of action with which democracy always confronts individuals and communities becomes impossibly complicated. Growth is undermined because growth implies not simply change but change in some direction, and direction implies a starting point, a past.

Earlier, we noted that leaders must define where on the tradition-change continuum their school is located and the school's relationship to the larger community context. Most often, schools serve a conservative function as the keeper of tradition. Such a function is crucial in postindustrial society, in which change occurs in often chaotic and directionless fashion. On the other hand, leaders may see the need for schools to avoid being overly mired in tradition and to encourage their communities to change undesirable status quo elements of the society, e.g. racial bigotry.

The systemic leader's role becomes one of being sensitive to the community context and the part the school plays in this context. Educational leaders can no longer afford to be isolated from their communities—not only because of political support reasons, but for defining the balance of tradition and change and the role that schools play in maintaining this balance.

Put in more practical terms, they can do this by:

(1) **Developing and maintaining contacts with community members and organizations in order to communicate school purpose.** Leaders must be sensitive to changing values within the community at large or segments of the community that may present new demands on the school.

(2) **Inviting community members to school functions that highlight human growth and community development.** This keeps the primary aim of schooling in sight for community groups.

(3) **Encouraging the use of community members who exemplify the kind of values the school's purpose wishes to reinforce.**

10. Striking Balances

In addition to articulating purpose, the second function of democratic leadership is to balance organizational extremes. Again, we can think about the striking of organizational balances in terms of the three basic levels: classroom, school, and community.

Striking Balances at the Classroom Level

In organizing at the classroom level, a major dilemma emerges: expertise vs. choice. A traditional battle wages in most schools between expertise and choice, or, more specifically, between educators and parents. On the one hand are educators who argue that expertise should be the basis for the organization of instruction. Educators, because they have the training and experience, should have total control over what is taught and how it is taught. In contrast, parents and some policymakers argue that there needs to be choice in terms the organization of instruction. Parents, because they have more varied experience with their children and are their legal and natural advocates, should have at least some choice over instructional decision, such as the type of curriculum and the nature of instructional techniques used. This debate is heated in some schools and districts and puts administrators frequently in the middle. Both sides can provide evidence to demonstrate that there are abuses and inefficiencies on either side. Even in the reform arena, administrators are caught between the teacher professionalism proponents and the school choice defenders.

Systemic leadership in these terms also involves a balancing act in which both expertise and choice are criteria for the organization of instruction. The specific way this balance is achieved depends in part on the particular school and the needs of students within that school. Features such as degree of diversity of community/students, level of parental involvement, available resources, and competence of staff influence the balance that is struck. But in any case, some balance is necessary. Instructional organization that is based only on educators' expertise runs the risk of disenfranchising parents and community—an undemocratic response. Instructional organization that is based only on choice runs the risk of a quality control problem or one in which certain student needs go unmet. Here again, the administrator who avoids extremes by facilitating the communication of groups across system levels and organizational boundaries is more likely to be successful in organizing democracy. In schools systemically led, both educators and parents become naturally involved in instructional decisions. This involvement is ensured by leadership that promotes conversation about instructional content and processes.

Striking Balances at the School Level

The individual vs. community dilemma is also apparent at the organizational level. Organizational control and decision making that only emphasizes teacher autonomy runs the risk of egoistic individualism. Such individualism, contrary to some advocates of professionalism, is undemocratic because it loses sight of the individual's responsibility to the community. On the other hand, it is possible to run a similar risk by emphasizing only the community/group in decision making. An infrequently admitted pitfall of collaboration is groupthink. If groups become so coherent that there is little room for diversity and dissension, the result is unproductive and ineffective decisions that do not contribute to human growth or community responsibility.

Systemic leadership at the organizational level must again involve a balancing act in which both individual and group decisions are respected. In a democracy, teacher au-

tonomy make sense only in terms of group autonomy, i.e., the freedom of teachers or other groups within the school to have a significant say in the way school decisions are made.

This type of systemic leadership can be practiced by:

(1) **Emphasizing opportunities for individuals within and across groups in the school to communicate their concerns and views regarding relevant school decisions.**

(2) **Using the criteria of relevance and expertise as the basis for determining what groups should be involved in specific decisions.** However, if the expertise of various individuals or groups is lacking but these groups have relevant reasons to be included in the decision making, the leaders should use socialization means for increasing expertise.

(3) **Encouraging diversity and dissension as a way to avoid groupthink.**

Striking Balances at the Community Level

Public schools in a democracy face a constant dilemma at the community level: Excessive vs. no concern with accountability. Because schools are public institutions, they are accountable to taxpayers, who foot the bill. At times, various groups at the community level—e.g., courts, legislative bodies, advocacy organizations—demand various kinds of accountability of the school. This accountability can become excessive, placing the school in situations that contradict what educators believe are in the students' interest or in situations where there are multiple and contradictory requirements. Leaders may attempt to meet everyone's expectations, throwing the school into chaos. On the other hand, leaders may decide that the accountability expectations are excessive and turn a deaf ear to all of them. This can reduce the school's resources or even create legal difficulties.

A good illustration of this is described by Post (1992), who writes of the Joshua Gap suburban school system. In this case, community members, who recently moved into the area to escape urban blight, demanded that the school system reverse a decision to use a multicultural curriculum. The school system found itself between a reasonable, supportive group of old-timers and a very vocal, unsupportive group of newcomers.

Leadership practice at the community level must respond to the dilemma again by balancing accountability concerns. Instead of reacting to accountability issues after they arise, a more preventive and proactive stance is called for. School leaders are beginning to see their roles in more institutional terms that they traditionally have. The leader who waits until community expectations coalesced before finding out what the expectations are, abdicates responsibility of community leadership. In this case, followership, i.e., being sensitive to the views others, precedes leadership. The first step in balancing is being proactive, i.e., working with the community in developing its expectations of the school. This proactive stance also pertains to legislative and state education office accountability concerns; leaders must be aware of concerns before they coalesce into major demands on the school. Leadership becomes systemic when leaders understand how the school fits into a larger system and when leaders reinforce sensitivity and communication between the school and other system levels.

A second suggestion is also proactive, i.e., being aware of problems in the school that may result in accountability mandates. A group of superintendents in the late 1970s, while developing responses to P.L. 94-142, admitted they had no one to blame but themselves with regard to the legislation that had been passed. They acknowledged that they and other school leaders had known that special education youngsters were being ignored by the system. While not all of these problems can be resolved before they become public issues, a sufficient number can, and their resolution should

reduce the excessive accountability for schools.

Leadership practice also involves bringing groups together in ways that facilitate collaboration and cooperation instead of conflict. School administrators can be leaders in terms of helping groups understand how their conflicting demands on schools result in ineffective school responses. At the same time, it is important for leaders to recognize the value of diversity in their community. Diversity, instead of being avoided, may be used to improve the quality of school programs and even to build support for the school as leaders take differences seriously.

II. Educating (Socializing) for Democracy

If the first task of administrators is to articulate the purpose of schools in a democracy and the second is to balance organizational extremes sufficiently to deliver an instructional program aimed at that purpose, the third is to create the actual experience of democracy. Only by experiencing democracy can people learn its true potential for individual growth in and through community. The experience, in fact, socializes people for democratic life, giving them practice with behaviors that shape their identity. In this way, socialization is a critical component of systemic leadership.

Systemic leadership's responsibility for socialization is not only to students, but also to teachers, parents, and administrators themselves. Adults, as well as youngsters, do not come naturally by the cooperative spirit and team-building skills necessary in democratic schools. These skills and knowledge must be taught, and the need for such lessons resides in every situation where the lack of socialization hinders the spirit of democratic organization. Administrators who want more democratic schools can help to socialize people for democracy at the classroom, school, and community levels.

Socialization at the Classroom Level

At the classroom level, leaders face a potential dilemma regarding how students are taught, i.e., indoctrination vs. value-free instruction. One of the responses to democracy's disposition toward chaos is to turn instruction into indoctrination. This is the parallel of authoritarianism in school style. The extreme opposite of indoctrination is a value-free-anything-goes approach in which democracy merges with radical relativism. At this extreme, teachers and administrators are careful to avoid any mention or discussion of values.

Democracy, however, assumes values, e.g., the value of the opinions of others, an educated citizenry, group decision-making, self-control, and community responsibility. This means that instruction is not value-free but must consistently emphasize democratic values.

In more concrete terms, leadership can socialize for democracy at the classroom level by:

(1) **Providing the experience of democracy's purpose in the curriculum.** In the content of social studies, language arts, and other humanities courses, it is easy to look at how individuals have grown in and through community. Even in math or science classes, the purpose of democracy can be discussed indirectly if the content of problems and experiments is carefully constructed.

(2) **Providing firsthand experiences for students to learn about their communities.** Students who learn about their community's history and its future plans become attached to the community. They begin to experience being part of the community, of living in a particular place at a particular time. This sense of belonging becomes part of their identity and grows deeper as they compare their community to others.

(3) **Giving students the experience of governing their own learning, when appropriate.** Exercising this responsibility prepares students for future responsibilities.

(4) **Providing leadership and cooperative learning opportunities.**

(5) **Allowing students to develop student behavior codes and be involved in their enforcement to gain experience with the rule of law.**

(6) **Infusing democratic values into routine teaching and administrative activities that students experience.** To ensure that activities are appreciated for what they contribute to individual and collective growth, students might be asked to reflect on conduct within a democratic context.

(7) **Encouraging tolerance by inviting alternative ways to implement purpose.** There are as many ways to achieve growth as there are people. An atmosphere of openness to diverse learning goals and styles not only can help more people grow in different ways, but also can teach students tolerance for the diversity they will find in any democratic organization.

Socialization at the School Level

At the school level, professional development activities provide administrators with their primary opportunity to socialize staff. Currently, the typical professional development program is neither democratic nor effective. Routinely, professional development is mandated by someone higher up the organizational ladder, with content based on the perception that teachers could teach better if they had particular technical skills or knowledge. The experience has limited effectiveness in transmitting the requisite skills and knowledge, and its top-down approach is entirely ineffective in socializing teachers for democracy.

In general, administrators who want to help staff experience democracy's purpose must ensure that democratic ideals are incorporated in the aims, content, and processes of professional development programs.

In more concrete terms, they can provide this experience by:

(1) **Ensuring that the aim of professional development is individual growth in and through community.** Just as growth is the purpose of instructing students in a democratic organization, so is growth the aim of professional development, for teachers too must grow for a democratic organization to be effective. To achieve this goal, individual teachers must feel personal and professional growth, and the community of teachers must grow. Both goals probably can be advanced more by improving the climate in which teachers work—for example, by reinforcing norms of collegiality and experimentation—than by offering hundreds of workshops.

(2) **Ensuring that the content of professional development reflects democratic ideas and values.** On one level, content should help teachers explore ways to teach democratic values and processes in the classroom.

On another level, content should focus teachers on the democratic processes of teachers working cooperatively. Teachers are not born with the knowledge of how to be democratic, and few graduate schools teach it. If democratic schools are to work, administrators must help teachers develop the knowledge and skills for working cooperatively, settling disputes, reaching consensus, living with conflict, and building teams.

On a third level, the content of professional development must focus on democracy itself and how its extreme tendencies must be balanced before democracy can be educated. Teachers, like administrators, are more familiar with autocratic forms of organization and management and have a tenden-

cy to lapse into these forms when disorder threatens. Professional development for democracy in the schools must focus on values, norms, and democratic dispositions as well as skills. With this focus, professional development will provide the socialization that helps teachers to exercise systemic leadership in a democracy.

(3) **Ensuring that the processes of professional development provide a democratic experience.** If the three content changes described above are implemented in a top-down, district-based or principal-based fashion, the message sent to teachers would be mixed indeed. To implement democratic reforms in professional development, the more effective route would be for administrators and teachers to work cooperatively to identify and plan professional development needs and activities.

The typical top-down, consultant-dominated professional development process puts neither decision-making authority nor resources in the hands of the people who need them the most, that is, teachers. Leadership for democracy must place the recipient of professional development at the beginning and end of the development process. Given their different subject specialties, career stages, and classroom-specific dynamics, teachers are in the best position to know their own needs and to determine the development activities most conducive to growth.

Socialization at the Community Level

At the community level, too, socialization for democracy requires administrators to provide community members with a democratic experience. Too often, the kind of involvement that educators request is unrewarding to the people involved. Parents, for instance, are asked to duplicate worksheets, chaperone field trips, or monitor halls. While these activities undoubtedly benefit schools, they do not serve democratic purpose. The involvement neither educates them about the purpose of schools in a democracy nor enlists their contribution toward systemic leadership.

In general, administrators must be proactive in involving the community in its schools, and this means opening schools to meaningful community involvement as well as trying to influence the community. Socializing is a two-way street.

In more concrete terms, socialization for democracy at the community level can be achieved by:

(1) **Encouraging investment as well as involvement in the school.** Rather than offering superficial involvement opportunities, administrators should build investment in the school's purposes by keeping parents and other community members informed of school problems and processes, seeking their counsel on resolving problems and streamlining processes, and generally including them in meaningful phases of school decision making.

(2) **Organizing this investment in cooperation with educators.** In a democratic setting, parents and community members work not as sole authorities making demands on the school to have their own agendas recognized, but as cooperative members of a team, whose goal is to collaborate on identifying and achieving democratic purpose. The role of administrators is to make this process clear and to provide opportunities for community members to meet with teachers and administrators to discuss school issues, concerns, and problems.

(3) **Providing training in democratic processes so that community members can better exercise the democratic rights and responsibilities for school decisions that they share with teachers and administrators.** Training in consensus building, living with conflict, team building, and so forth, will help parents and community members to make the most of their investment in the schools. Again, such socialization experiences reinforce community members' contributions toward valuable systemic leadership.

12. Summary and Conclusion

We want democracy, not for its own sake, but for what we hope to achieve by being democratic, and that is individual growth in and through community. This is the promise of democracy and its justification. If democracy did not promise to help us to become better people living in a better society, we would not want it.

The leaders of democracy have a responsibility to educate people to fulfill democracy's promise to themselves and one another. This responsibility long ago provided the impetus for the establishment of our system of public education, and to this day, a primary purpose of schools remains to provide opportunities for individual and collective growth and well-being.

To achieve this purpose, schools require a special type of leadership, which is itself democratic. Schools cannot teach about democracy unless they provide the experience of democracy, and so schools must be governed not by the few, but by the many—by students, teachers, parents, and community members as well as administrators. For schools to be democratic, everyone affected by school decisions must have a voice in those decisions. Leadership, thus, is diffused throughout the school system. Because it is systemwide and system pervasive, it is systemic leadership.

Systemic leadership poses a huge challenge because, in providing the experience of democracy, it unleashes the forces of democracy, which are inherently unstable and not easy to balance. Democracies tend to become imbalanced in a number of ways. First, they tend to make people highly individualistic, which, when taken to an extreme, makes them more self-regarding than other-regarding. Then, a downward spiral begins.

The more people think only of themselves and their own sphere of activity, the less they communicate with others. The less they communicate, the less they value the collective human enterprise. With no value accorded the collective enterprise, daily work loses meaning. Lack of meaning undermines commitment to common purpose, which makes concerted actions increasingly difficult. With no common purpose, people focus even more diligently on their own small sphere of activity—be it teachers in their own classroom or administrators in their own office—and further close themselves off from others. Busy with their own activity, they prefer that others run the collective enterprise. And the spiral thus ends with people in a democracy often relinquishing the power that democracy grants them to run their own lives. They allow power to reconcentrate in traditional, hierarchical positions.

In other words, if a culture has a built-in tendency to make people focus only on themselves, without regard for the consequence to others, then they will progressively redefine their culture in a direction that is increasingly closed to diversity and without human growth and dignity. People are free and equal only to the degree that their society and culture let them be (Taylor, 1992).

The aim of systemic leadership is to counterbalance these tendencies and educate people to grow through democracy. Systemic leadership assumes these tendencies can be overcome through proactive interventions.

The interventions of effective systemic leadership in schools have three goals: to articulate school purpose, to strike balances between forces inherent in democratic schools, and to socialize students and adults for democracy.

The success of these three interventions depends as much on mastering the art of followership as on mastering the art of leadership. Followership has five components: goodwill, mutual adjustment, commitment, caring, and communication.

Goodwill is the willingness to cooperate with others to accomplish a common goal. Without goodwill, people cannot compromise, and compromise necessarily precedes the collective decision making required for concerted action.

Democracy requires people to mutually adjust their behavior in the interest of common purpose. In a democratic organization, where everyone has a decision-making role, no one person gets everything his or her way. Compromises and mutual adjustment are inevitable, which is why democratic organization is the most demanding of organizational forms.

Effective mutual adjustment requires commitment, caring, and communication. People have to be committed to the common purpose of individual and collective growth before they will compromise. If they are committed to this purpose, they believe in taking care of themselves and others. If they care for others, they are interested in communication with them. They believe that communication is essential to understanding the needs of others and acting with goodwill toward them, adjusting behavior and compromising as necessary to achieve the common purpose.

Knowing how to follow is essential to systemic leadership because it permits administrators to step back, respect the contributions others can make toward the common purpose, and allow them to lead the team forward.

For systemic leadership to emerge in a school system, the traditional leadership—school principals, central office personnel, the superintendent, and the board—must seek to provide the experience of democracy in classrooms, schools, and communities. The traditional leadership team must socialize students, teachers, parents, and community members in democratic processes, so that appreciation spreads of democracy's potential to help people grow through community. As each group experiences growth, their actions will reinforce democracy in other areas throughout the school system. Teachers who are socialized for democracy, for example, are more likely to use democratic processes in their classrooms. Similarly, at all levels, school leaders must seek to understand and reflect on how their actions reinforce democratic processes at other levels. In this way, democratic processes will begin to pervade the school system, until leadership itself pervades the system and becomes systemic.

When leadership becomes systemic, it will be fulfilling its role of helping people to grow individually and collectively. It will be educating democracy.

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